**Camp 93** **- Harperley Camp, Fir Tree, near Crook, County Durham**

Included in the 1945 ICRC camp list – Labour Camp. 93. Harperley Camp, Fir Tree, Bishop Auckland, C.Durham.

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| **1947 camp list** | | | | | | | |
| 93(G.W.C.) | Harperley Camp, Fir Tree, Bishop Auckland, Co.Durham | N. | Priswar, Crook | Crook 135 (272) | Crook | Lt.Col.G.K.Stobart | v/1453/2 |

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| **Prisoner of War Camps (1939 – 1948) - Project report by Roger J.C. Thomas - English Heritage 2003** | | | | | | | |
| OS NGR | Sheet | No. | Name & Location | County | Cond’n | Type 1945 | Comments |
| NZ 1269 3553 | 92 | 93 | Harperley Camp, Fir Tree, Crook | County Durham | 1 | German Working Camp | STANDARD type. **SCHEDULED** |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Location:** Off the A689.  **Before the camp:** Farmland. The nearby Harperley Hall was used as a prisoner of war camp during WW1.  **Pow Camp:**  **1942/3** - Italian pows were housed in tents while they were erecting about 50-55 prefabricated buildings, supervised by a contracting company and British troops. Most buildings were Ministry of Works and Planning ‘M.O.W.P Standard 18’6” Hut’ modular design, with pre-cast concrete frames, infill panels and asbestos cement sheet roofs. Further buildings requiring more structural support, such as the cookhouse and showers, were made from concrete blocks. The pow compound was surrounded by a barbed wire fence, but no guard towers were built.  The 12-acre site had a standard layout with a main pow compound, and with guards’ huts and offices at the front by the road. Buildings included a water tower, offices, officer's mess, a canteen, guard rooms, barrack huts, ablution blocks, cell blocks, a camp reception station (medical facility/hospital), a cookhouse, dining rooms, recreation rooms and living huts. Huts were used as a camp chapel and a theatre. The canteen contained painted wall panels showing scenes of the Rhine Valley, animals, woodlands and lakes, with imitation curtains at the windows on painted hardboard. Accommodation huts housed up to 48 men in bunk beds and were heated by iron stoves.  **May and November 1944** - The camp was listed as an Italian Labour Battalion under the Northern Command area, (WO 32/10737). The Italians were recorded as co-operators.  **September 1944** - most of the Italians were dispersed to hostels and farms to make way for an initial batch of 716 German prisoners identified as ‘low risk’. |  |
| Ordnance Survey 1954 |

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| --- |
| Oversight and development of re-education activities and English teaching for German pows was carried out by PID (Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office) / COGA (Control Office for Germany and Austria – UK). Visits and reports were made. The standard of the reports varied greatly. The visitors took little interest, if any, in activities other than re-education. They rarely mentioned welfare, sports, games, pastimes, crafts, etc of the pows. If there were still Italian pows in hostels, they were usually ignored by PID. |

**1-2 May 1945** – English education report. English inspectors met teachers, gave talks, checked teaching texts and resources, and tested the pow pupils.

Commandant: Major Tetlow (Acting Cmdt: Capt Thomas). Camp leader: Wachmeister Ehemann.

Funds within the camp were raised through sales of goods in the canteen. The camp had raised £80 which was sufficient to buy a range of books.

**19/20 November 1945** – English education visit. Hostels were unnamed and no numbers given. Italians were still present at this camp, mainly in hostels. Many pows worked in a sugar-beet factory.

The canteen at Harperley in 1946. The wooden panels were decorated with German scenes >

**Spring 1946** – Intake of many pows from camps in the USA. Most had very low morale as they had been misinformed in the US that they were being repatriated. Instead, they found themselves in working camps in the UK.

Other pows were transferred from camps in Belgium where there were extremely poor conditions – some were described as, “*verging on starvation.”*

**29 July 1946** – Re-education Report. Strength; 2 officers (M.O. and dentist), 2004 Other Ranks.

Commandant: Lt Col G K Stobart. Camp leader: O/Fw Ehemann (A).

2nd i/c: Major Tetlow Deputy C/L: Fw Hermann

Interpreter: S/Sgt Hoffer German M.O.: Marine S/Arzt Ruellmann (B)

A very unusual arrangement with the previous Commandant listed as 2nd i/c.

The Camp leader had “*a fine, commanding personality*,” he was building a good team to develop activities.

Less than half the pows had been politically screened. 3 ex-SS pows were active Nazis at the HQ, trying to influence others not to co-operate with re-education. It was recommended they be removed.

Morale was “*fairly high*” other than the intakes from USA. Negative aspects were uncertainty over repatriation, bad news from Germany and rumours that Nazis in Germany were being given posts of responsibility. Positive factors included relationships with the British staff and a wide range of activities. A rare mention of sports – football, handball, table tennis, boxing and athletics.

40% of pows were ‘youth’ (under 25). Many showed apathy towards organised activities.

The standard list of re-education activities was given:

Wochenpost and Ausblick – 200/100 copies received.

Newspapers – Adequate supply of a range of British papers. No German papers.

Library – 700 books; inadequate.

Lectures – Regular, except at Usworth due to its remote location.

Discussion groups – at all sites at least once per week. There was a camp ‘parliament,’ but this had been suspended as some new pows had been a disturbing influence.

Films – Every 3 weeks at all sites except, Bedburn and Langton Grange.

Wireless – at all sites. HQ had 35 speakers around the camp.

Camp magazine – none. A monthly short report on activities was published.

Press review – At all sites.

English instruction – 160 pupils at all sites.

Other camp activities –

Religion – Religious interest was low. Lutheran Padre O/Gefr Herzog (B) held services and classes. Pows could attend local services in churches.

Education – Classes for agriculture, arithmetic, building, electricity, French, German, mathematics, physics, radio and Russian.

Theatre – all sites except Lanchester had a stage.

Music – Camp orchestra gave light music concerts and toured the hostels when transport was available.

**22/26 October 1946** – English Inspector’s Report. Strength 1888 in HQ, 7 hostels and billets. 237 pupils in 14 classes at all sites.

Commandant: Lt Col G K Stobart. 2nd i/c Major Tetlow. Camp leader: Wachmeister Ehemann.

Interpreter: S/Sgt Hoffer (Swiss) [Hofer]

**4-22 November 1946** – Segregation section report [political screening]. Strength; 5 officers, 1783 OR.

Change of Camp Leader; Ernst Hermann (A) [Herrmann] was deputy; the previous leader had been repatriated. Aged 31, a joiner, *“intelligent, well educated and very conscientious,*” but he was finding it difficult to cope with some of the younger C grade pows.

New deputy leader; Uffz Karle Jehle (B-), aged 32, a clerk, no longer believed in National Socialism. “*Conscientious and co-operates well with the camp leader.”*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Political screening for all sites: | A+ | A | A- | B+ | B | B- | C | C+ | Not known |
|  | 4 | 98 | 1 | 242 | 606 | 246 | 332 | 30 | - |

The numbers in the table for the ‘Complete Camp’ = 1559, which is 224 less than the strength given; no explanation was given for this. The camp had 34% of B-/C/C+ grade pows which was high in comparison to most camps. Many of these were young Waffen-SS from camps in Belgium and Germany, and many held on to their Nazi views – “*Self-pity and complete political apathy was the predominant attitude.”*

The Commandant was not in favour of political screening, or COGA in general – the British staff held similar views, except for the Interpreter. However, in reports the Commandant was often praised for his concern over the welfare of pows and ensuring that a range of activities was available for them.

The chapel at Harperley >

**2/5 December 1946** – Re-education Report. Strength; 5 officers (3 Medical officers and 2 padres), 1770 OR.

Commandant: Lt Col G K Stobart. Camp leader: Fw Herrmann (A).

Interpreter: S/Sgt Hoffer Deputy C/L: Uffz Jehle (B-)

S/Sgt Sondheim German M.O.: Marine S/Arzt Ruellmann (B)

Senior Interpreter Hoffer; “*though young, is able and keen.”*

The visitor had been to the camp twice before, (reports not in the file) and he noted that morale had fallen, mainly due to their political gradings, (the better the grade, the sooner repatriated, in theory). Although there were pows holding on to Nazi views they were not active, and he believed that the grades were too severe.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Political screening: | A | B | C | C+ | Unknown |
|  | 129 | 1172 | 339 | 28 | 107 |

35-40% of pows were ‘youth’ – many were ex-SS and had been graded as C. Many were apathetic to politics and camp activities.

The standard list of activities was similar to the previous report. It was reported that there had been only 3 lectures in 3 months.

Religion – a Harvest Thanksgiving had been held in Durham Cathedral in October and; “*had made a deep impression.”*

**7/10 January 1947** – Re-education report and Review appeals against political grading. Strength; 5 officers, 1260 OR

No changes to senior personnel. The Commandant was well respected in the camp.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Political screening for all sites: | A+ | A | A- | B+ | B | B- | C | C+ | Not known |
|  | 5 | 110 | 1 | 253 | 507 | 185 | 200 | 1 | 3 |

40 appeals were heard – 29 allowed, 11 rejected. 215 appeals were still pending. 184 pows had been repatriated to date.

Morale had improved due to the start of repatriations and a relaxation of restrictions. A positive factor arose when the pows saw that some others were successful in their appeals against their political grading.

Changes to re-education activities:

Newspapers – some German papers arriving via the YMCA.

Library – still inadequate with 800 books. A new library and quiet room had been built in the canteen.

Lectures – once a month, but two hostels (unnamed) were not receiving any.

Films – YMCA and Gaumont British; GB were not popular as they charged 6d (6 pence).

Camp magazine – *'Der Quell'* (The Source).

**4-6 March 1947** – English Inspector’s Report. Strength; 1205 in HQ, 7 hostels and billets. 163 pupils in 12 classes at all sites.

**29/31 May 1947** – Re-education Report. Strength; 4 officers, 1753 OR.

The previous deputy (Jehle) was Camp Leader – *“has developed into a fine, controlling personality; he keeps a firm hold on the camp, stands no nonsense from Black [C grade] youths and furthers re-education keenly*.”

A new deputy: Uffz Gressmann (B+) – previously hostel leader at Lanchester, “*young and highly intelligent*.” He had deferred his repatriation.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Political screening: | A | B+ | B | B- | C | C+ |
|  | 8 | 351 | 929 | 439 | 4 | 1 |

Note the large fall in number of C grades. 70 appeals pending. 504 pows repatriated to date.

Morale was changeable due to large intakes from other camps. Pows transferred from camps run by the RAF had generally experienced better accommodation and lighter work – many found it hard to adjust to heavy agricultural work in the north of England, (also commented on in other camps). The camp was “*extremely well run*” and the Commandant well respected. Pows recognised that they were justly and sympathetically treated.

Changes to re-education activities:

Library – increased to 1200 books.

Press review – A 10 p.m. news bulletin was broadcast in HQ. Bi-weekly news sheets were distributed to the hostels.

Other camp activities -

Religion – RC padre, Cammer (A), “excellent both as a man and as a priest.”

Education – small classes held for; Rumanian, French, Spanish, electricity, stenography, arithmetic and the arbitur.

Entertainment – Officers from Featherstone Camp 18 visited this camp to participate in entertainments. Excellent orchestra gave regular concerts.

Outside contacts – Visits made to; Durham Cathedral, University and County Council.

**July 1947** – recorded that the RC priest from this camp, A Cammer, was visiting Darras Camp 69 and others. He only spent 1 week in 4 at camp 93.

**28 July – 1 August and 8 August 1947** – Strength 3 officers, 1472 OR.

No change to senior personnel. 633 pows repatriated to date.

Harperley was one of the most successful camps at achieving a positive morale and developing re-education. 8 pows had already received civilian status in the UK and a further 34 had applied. Other pows were asking if they could bring their wives to the country. Good reports received from the farmers the pows worked for.

Changes to activities –

Library – 1600 books, the International Red Cross sent large batches of books to many camps.

Travelling Films Ltd had replaced Gaumont British, but many of their films were regarded as poor quality. Information service films were also sent and were highly praised. Bedburn and Langton Grange still unable to show films due to no electric supply.

Wireless – all HQ barracks had loudspeakers.

Outside contacts – of all the re-education activities this is the one that is most often referred to in ex-pow diaries and memoires as having a positive effect. The report stated that the people of Durham were fair and friendly to the pows. Formal contacts had been established with – Durham Cathedral, Council and University; Crook and Willington Council; Crook labour party; the WEA.

Religion – a new protestant padre, Pfarrer Krupka (B) – “*an amazing little man; theologian, dramatist, poet, scenario writer and party member since 1932*.”

**9 August 1947** – an ‘Open Day’ was held; pows could invite guests to view handicrafts, the completed guest house, and see an operetta that had been written by one of the pows.

**30 September – 2 October 1947** – English Inspector’s Report. Strength; 1171. 55 pupils in 5 classes at all sites + some studying privately.

**21-23 October 1947** – Re-educational Survey. Strength; 3 officers, 973 OR.

Commandant: Lt Col G K Stobart. Camp leader: Uffz Jehle (B+).

Interpreter: None Deputy C/L: Ofw Paul Joisten (B+)

Acting Interpreter: Uffz Ott. German M.O.: S/Arzt Hildebrand (A)

Further praise for the Commandant and the way he looked after the welfare of the pows. Morale continued to be very high. 1009 pows repatriated to date.

The list of re-education activities was very similar to previous reports with some further improvements to the library, newspapers, and a microphone system in HQ so that lectures and announcements could be made.

Education – Classes had dwindled due to repatriations. In HQ; mathematics and physics, in Langton Grange, agriculture.

Entertainment – Orchestra with 15 members, a theatre group of 8. Further visits from the theatre and marionette groups from Camp 18.

**14 November 1947** - Camp number included in an ‘Urgent Memorandum’ (FO 939/270) regarding inspection of food parcels.

**2/6 December 1947** – Re-educational survey. Strength; 3 officers, 953 OR.

A new Interpreter Officer; 2/Lt Fullick.

A list of issues arising was raised by the visitor:

* A letter had been received in the camp from a pow warning of mass thefts of pow property at the repatriation camp at Munsterlager – sadly this was repeated in a great many instances and was a sad end to what many pows had previously considered to be a fair captivity in UK hands.
* Unemployment – employment was one of the main reasons given for holding pows for a greater length of time, this argument was destroyed by bouts of unemployment, it also resulted in the pows being unable to earn any money.
* Dismantling of German industries caused major disillusionment.
* Food at Oaklands Hospital was regarded as too little, it was set at civilian rations rather than those for a working pow.
* Visits to pow patients at Oaklands from local friends had to be approved by the War Office which was far too cumbersome and unnecessary.
* Post to patients went by a circuitous route via camps, even if the pow was billeted elsewhere.
* The list of items that could be sent by post was often vague, e.g. safety-pins had been rejected as being ‘steel goods,’ and second hand shirts rejected as containing cotton. The visitor pointed out that in both cases the rule was technically correct.
* Denazification – it was regarded as unfair that members of the Nazi party should be punished in Germany, and not just war criminals. The suspension of sittings of the Denazification Commission was seen as a positive result.
* Civilianisation – a new scheme increasing the likelihood of being accepted to remain in the UK was welcomed by many.

Simplified screening figures given: A 3, B 953. 1137 pows repatriated to date.

35% of pows were ‘youth’ – this was not seen as a problem. Links had been made with Church Youth Clubs in Crook and Bishop Auckland.

Arrangements had been made for pows from HQ to visit the Army Cinema Corporation in York.

**11 February 1948** – pows from this camp attended a meeting at Brancepeth Hostel (Camp 18) regarding difficulties over repatriation. The speaker held a discussion about conditions existing in Germany.

**2-5 March 1948** – Re-educational Survey. Strength; 1 officer, 246 OR.

1 change to senior personnel: Camp leader; Kaiser, previously leader at Usworth, then Langton Grange.

With a fall in numbers and efforts by the Commandant, all pows were employed which kept morale high.

Visitors to camps still open at this time were asked to complete a survey about pow attitudes towards the British. It was not carried out in any scientific manner, it was too late and pointless. In many camps the survey was carried out by asking whoever happened to be available to raise their hands to the questions. This visitor (A.Heron) recognised the invalidity of such methods and carried out his own surveys, questionnaire and discussions to estimate more accurate responses. He also recognised that the positive atmosphere in this particular camp would skew results in comparison to pows in general. His findings were, approximately:

75% were ‘positively disposed’ towards the British.

20% were ‘distrustful and aloof.’

5% had ‘active animosity.’

The camp closed soon after this report..

I have seen a note that one pow hung himself at a farm, but I do not have a name or date for this sad event.

Known Camp Commandants:

1943-1945; Major Tetlow

1946-1948 Lieutenant Colonel George Kinnear Stobart, from the Durham Light Infantry.

**Numbers of pows in Camp 93**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Known to be open |  | No record |  | Not open |  | With another camp |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 | <1946 | 7/1946 | 10/1946 | 11/1946 | 12/1946 | 1/1947 | 3/1947 | 5/1947 | 8/1947 | 9/1947 | 10/1947 | 12/1947 | 3/1948 |
| Main HQ |  |  | 792 | 783 | 782 | 612 | 426 | 525 | 758 | 899 | 720 | 545 | 626 | 169 |
| High Spen |  |  | 76 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Consett |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Bedburn |  |  | 283 | 203 | 176 | 191 | 120 | 108 | 261 | 229 | 200 | 176 | 173 | 18 |
| Hamsterley Hall |  |  |  | 115 | 97 | 113 | 92 | 78 | 127 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Langton Grange |  | With 288 | 84 | 75 | 73 | 79 | 79 | 67 | 93 | 103 | 90 | 93 | 36 |  |
| Lanchester |  |  | 97 | 92 | 91 | 96 | 66 | 58 | 42 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Mount Oswald |  |  | 104 | 117 | 100 | 139 | 78 | 117 | 114 | 125 | 20 | 18 | 2 |  |
| Usworth |  | With 139 | 103 | 118 | 115 | 128 | 51 | 50 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Windlestone H | Camp 4 | With 288 | 272 | 226 | 211 | 229 | 180 | 165 | 161 | 84 |  |  |  |  |
| Oaklands Hosp. |  | (2) | (2) |  | 23 | 43 | 42 | ? | 36 | 25 | ? | 47 | 34 |  |
| Black Beck |  |  | Camp 613 + possibly hostel for a different camp | | | | | | | | | | | 60 |
| ‘Sundries’ |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 24 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Billets |  |  | 149 | 159 | 115 | 145 | 131 | (1) | 141 | (1) | 140 | 97 | 85 |  |
| Total |  |  | 2006 | 1888 | 1788 | 1775 | 1265 | 1205 | 1757 | 1475 | 1171 | 976 | 956 | 247 |

1. Included in numbers above. (2) Not listed in reports for Harperley HQ.

**After the camp:** The site was used for a short time to house displaced persons. When returned to its owner, it was used for storage and poultry sheds until 1999. GivenScheduled Monument status in 2002, many buildings still exist. Since then, it seems to have had a great deal of money in grants. 2019, Weardale Cheese is based here.

**Further Information:**

National Archives FO 939/173 – 93 Working Camp, Harperley Camp, Crook, Durham. Dated 1945-1948. Used above.

National Archives - FO 1120/223 – ‘Re-educational survey visit reports for camps 93 to 99.’ Used above – but mostly duplicates from file above.

‘Prisoner of War Camps in County Durham, 1944-48’ - J S Arcumes and J F Helvet – 2002 – County Durham Books. With photos, plans and further information.

‘Harperley PoW Camp 93: Forgotten in Time’ - Cynthia Ackley Nunn - 2022

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harperley_POW_Camp_93>

Vertical aerial photograph RAF 58/2131 0259 28-MAR-1957

**Hostels**

**Bedburn** – Capacity 150. NGR NZ 093 312 – shown on 1953 OS map >

****Formerly moorland, then acquired by the Forestry Commission. Used for a short while for training unemployed people before it became a pow camp. A bathing pool was built here by the pows. Picture shows the site when it was ‘Hamsterley Instructional Centre.’ One pow was killed in a bicycle accident.

**5 May 1946** – Opened as a German pow hostel.

**7/1946** – Hostel leader; Fw Dodenhoeft (B). No electricity supply. A hut was being converted into a chapel.

**11/1946 –** Hostel leader; H/Wach Ernst Alert (C). Aged 42, regular soldier, member of SA. A disciplinarian, “*still more or less Nazi.”*

**1/1947** – same leader, but with a positive report for making what was a difficult hostel into a success.

**5/1947** – same leader. RC priest from Wolingham visited frequently.

**8/1947** – same leader, he had been accepted to settle in the UK. **12/1947** – same leader.

**3/1948** – Hostel leader; Pauschke

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 | <1946 | 7/1946 | 10/1946 | 11/1946 | 12/1946 | 1/1947 | 3/1947 | 5/1947 | 8/1947 | 9/1947 | 10/1947 | 12/1947 | 3/1948 |
| Bedburn |  |  | 283 | 203 | 176 | 191 | 120 | 108 | 261 | 229 | 200 | 176 | 173 | 18 |

**Black Beck.** “*In the neighbourhood of a military camp at Barnard Castle.”*

Independent camp 613 – then it may have become a hostel for a different camp before this final entry:

**3/1948** – Hostel leader; Schnepel.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 | <1946 | 7/1946 | 10/1946 | 11/1946 | 12/1946 | 1/1947 | 3/1947 | 5/1947 | 8/1947 | 9/1947 | 10/1947 | 12/1947 | 3/1948 |
| Black Beck |  |  | Camp 613 + possibly hostel for a different camp | | | | | | | | | | | 60 |

**Consett** – used for a short time to hold Italian pows due for repatriation.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 | <1946 | 7/1946 | 10/1946 | 11/1946 | 12/1946 | 1/1947 | 3/1947 | 5/1947 | 8/1947 | 9/1947 | 10/1947 | 12/1947 | 3/1948 |
| Consett |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Hamsterley Hall** (Rowlands Gill). NGR NZ 142 556**.**

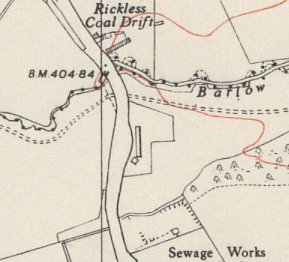
Pows housed in the grounds – may have been within the Hall as well, as names of German pows were scratched into walls inside.

**11/1946** – Hostel leader; O/Gefr Bernhard Merjan (A) [Meerjann], “*reliable and efficient.”* Was leader at High Spen. **1/1947** – same leader.

**5/1947** – Hostel leader; Stoecker (A), “*sound, reliable fellow*.”

Huts shown after the pow camp, when the site was used for European Volunteer Workers.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 | <1946 | 7/1946 | 10/1946 | 11/1946 | 12/1946 | 1/1947 | 3/1947 | 5/1947 | 8/1947 | 9/1947 | 10/1947 | 12/1947 | 3/1948 |
| Hamsterley Hall |  |  |  | 115 | 97 | 113 | 92 | 78 | 127 |  |  |  |  |  |

**High Spen** (Rowlands Gill) – NZ 1406 6067; shown on 1951 OS map.

This camp was situated on Rogues Lane between the drift mine and sewage site. Afterwards, it was known as, “*Squatter’s Camp*.”

**7/1946** – Hostel leader; O/Gefr Merjan (est B). Tented accommodation with huts for meals and recreation. Pows expected to be transferred to Hamsterley Hall hostel.

Rev W E W Barker visited the camp for services in German and taught English in a weekly class.

As this site was transferred to Hamsterley Hall, did it close down altogether?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 | <1946 | 7/1946 | 10/1946 | 11/1946 | 12/1946 | 1/1947 | 3/1947 | 5/1947 | 8/1947 | 9/1947 | 10/1947 | 12/1947 | 3/1948 |
| High Spen |  |  | 76 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Lanchester.** “on Kitswell Road.”

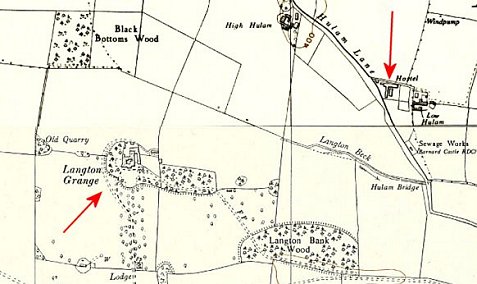
May have held Italian pows before these entries.

**7/1946 -** Hostel leader; O/Masch Arno Rolla(r) (B), aged 31, a fitter, “*very reliable, a genuine democrat with plenty of common sense. He is also strong enough to keep the C’s well under control.”***12/1946** – same leader, but upgraded to (A)

**1/1947** – Hostel leader; Uffz Gressmann (B), “*keen and reliable*,” but “*lacking in personality*.”

**5/1947** – Hostel leader; Wolf (B+)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 | <1946 | 7/1946 | 10/1946 | 11/1946 | 12/1946 | 1/1947 | 3/1947 | 5/1947 | 8/1947 | 9/1947 | 10/1947 | 12/1947 | 3/1948 |
| Lanchester |  |  | 97 | 92 | 91 | 96 | 66 | 58 | 42 |  |  |  |  |  |

**Langton Grange** (Staindrop) – Capacity 150. Langton Grange House (NZ 155 199) and a nearby hostel were used. Nearby hostel; Low Hulam – *“WWII POW Hostel. (Housed mostly Italian POW's who worked on the surrounding farms.) Near the site of Langton Grange; a large Country House now demolished.*"

**17 June 1946** – administration taken over from Gilling Camp 288

**7/1946** – Hostel leader; O/Wach Braun (B+), aged 32, regular soldier; “*conscientious and efficient*” – but, “*surly and generally depressed.”* No electricity supply.

**1/1947** – same leader, it was recommended he be replaced.

**5/1947** – Hostel leader; Fw Kaiser (B), previously leader at Usworth, a more positive view given than his last report; “*He has made a big difference; has a pleasuring personality, is a firm disciplinarian and has re-education well in hand.”* **8/1947** – same leader.

**10/1947** – Hostel leader; Hermann Schulze. **12/1947** – same leader.

1948 – used by volunteer civilian workers.

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|  | 1943 | <1946 | 7/1946 | 10/1946 | 11/1946 | 12/1946 | 1/1947 | 3/1947 | 5/1947 | 8/1947 | 9/1947 | 10/1947 | 12/1947 | 3/1948 |
| Langton Grange |  | With 288 | 84 | 75 | 73 | 79 | 79 | 67 | 93 | 103 | 90 | 93 | 36 |  |

**Mount Oswald** (Durham) – Capacity 100. NGR NZ 267 407.

**23 May 1946** – Opened as a hostel for Germans.

**7/1946** – Hostel leader; Wach Artur Kallmayer (B) [Kallmeyer], aged 31, a baker. “*Highly intelligent… strong personality… able to look after the C’s and C+’s*.” A hut was being converted into a chapel. 1**/1947** – Same leader, upgraded to (A).

**5/1947** – Hostel leader; Uffz Ott (B+), “*a fine influence, although still young.”* **8/1947** – same leader.

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|  | 1943 | <1946 | 7/1946 | 10/1946 | 11/1946 | 12/1946 | 1/1947 | 3/1947 | 5/1947 | 8/1947 | 9/1947 | 10/1947 | 12/1947 | 3/1948 |
| Mount Oswald |  |  | 104 | 117 | 100 | 139 | 78 | 117 | 114 | 125 | 20 | 18 | 2 |  |

|  |  |
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| **Oaklands Hospital**, Cockton Hill, Bishop Auckland, Co.Durham. Numbered 93a. (aka Bishop Auckland Hospital).  **Location:** NGR NZ 2081 2899. Alongside the general hospital. 11 large huts, and 1 small, are shown on the 1954 map.  **Before the camp:** In 1920 the site was marked as Auckland Union Workhouse.  **Pow Camp:** Opened in 1944 as a hospital for pows administered by camp 93. It had a capacity for up to 300 POWs in ten wards. Many of the staff, orderlies and doctors were pows. The hospital was run by 1/17 Group Emergency Medical Service, it cared for wounded and sick POWs as well as civilians and military personnel.  **24 June 1944** - International Red Cross inspection. There were German, Russian and Czech pows.  Commandant of 1/17 EMS; Major A W Neve.  (Whittingham’s Hospital nearby, was also used for German pow’s and was inspected by the International Red Cross on 5 August 1944.)  **12/1946** – Hostel leader; Gren Eugen Notter (B), “*young and pleasant.. adequate but in no way outstanding*.”  **6 October 1947** – English Inspector’s report for this hostel only. Strength 31 in pre-fabricated building. 12 pupils in 1 class. |  |
| Ordnance Survey 1954 |

Commandant; Major L H Robson. Same leader, he had applied to remain in the UK. He gave German lessons at the local girls’ secondary school.

The 31 pows listed were not patients, they were shift-working in the hospital. Classes were difficult to organise as hospital work took up most time. They were able to obtain books from the local library and Durham University. Unlike comments for other hostels, pows did not have a good reception in the local area, a planned visit to the local town council had to be abandoned due to an outcry in the press and the council itself – they were able to visit the local churches and cinema. **12/1947** – same leader.

Some details of the hospital are given in chapter 2 of ‘*Prisoners of England’* – M Kochan – MacMillan – 1980.

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|  | 1943 | <1946 | 7/1946 | 10/1946 | 11/1946 | 12/1946 | 1/1947 | 3/1947 | 5/1947 | 8/1947 | 9/1947 | 10/1947 | 12/1947 | 3/1948 |
| Oaklands Hosp. |  | (2) | (2) |  | 23 | 43 | 42 | ? | 36 | 25 | ? | 47 | 34 |  |

(2) Not listed in reports for Harperley HQ.

**Usworth** (Sunderland) – Capacity 100. Probable location - Havannah (Blackfell) Camp, off Village Lane. NZ 292 573 (area alongside Great Usworth).

**1 July 1946** – administration transferred from Wolviston Hall Camp 139.

**7/1946** - Hostel leader; Uffz Adolf Kasper (A), aged 43, motor mechanic, “*Outstanding personality, positively democratically inclined… intelligent and versatile*.” He had spent 4 years in Russia, 1916 to 1920 and spoke Russian, then spent 7 years in Canada and spoke excellent English. **12/1946** – same leader.

**1/1947** – Hostel leader; Fw Kaiser (B-), “*a good disciplinarian but little else*.” He went on to be hostel leader at Langton, and then leader for the whole camp.

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|  | 1943 | <1946 | 7/1946 | 10/1946 | 11/1946 | 12/1946 | 1/1947 | 3/1947 | 5/1947 | 8/1947 | 9/1947 | 10/1947 | 12/1947 | 3/1948 |
| Usworth |  | With 139 | 103 | 118 | 115 | 128 | 51 | 50 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Windlestone Hall** –Capacity 100. Previously listed as independent Camp 4. Pows accommodated within the hall. NZ 263 286.

**17 June 1946** – administration taken over from Gilling Camp 288

**7/1946** – Hostel leader; H/Fw Reinecke (B) [Reinicke], aged 31, a baker. “*A most efficient and reliable hostel leader.”*

Roman catholic pows visited by Dr Theissen and Father Moulding from Ushaw College. **1/1947** – same leader, upgraded to (A).

**5/1947** – Hostel leader; Andresen (B+), “*reliable and efficient.”* **8/1947** – same leader.

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|  | 1943 | <1946 | 7/1946 | 10/1946 | 11/1946 | 12/1946 | 1/1947 | 3/1947 | 5/1947 | 8/1947 | 9/1947 | 10/1947 | 12/1947 | 3/1948 |
| Windlestone H | Camp 4 | With 288 | 272 | 226 | 211 | 229 | 180 | 165 | 161 | 84 |  |  |  |  |